

would work out. The government itself would pay the providers less. But the plan then also makes it possible for the providers to recover if they want by charging the recipients more. The insurers and providers with whom the recipients would deal would not be required to absorb the cuts. Rather, to the extent that competitive pressures permitted, they would be free in various ways to pass them on; the recipients then would have to absorb them.

Our own sense is that, as the bills are written, this risk is too great. That's particularly the case because the Republicans would decimate Medicaid, the backstop program for the needy elderly and disabled. The house the Republicans are building has plenty of roof over cost but not enough floor under care. Much has been made in recent days of the deals that House Speaker Newt Gingrich is said to have struck with the American Medical Association and other provider groups to ensure their support for the plan. The assorted deals are small potatoes compared with this structural defect in the plan. It has to be fixed to make the plan worth passing.

The plan has, while we're at it, one other provision that would cost billions of dollars while serving no good purpose and ought to be killed outright. We have in mind the medical savings accounts the proposal would permit. Instead of paying a recipient's bills or giving the recipient a fixed amount to help buy an insurance policy or enroll in a managed care plan, the government would put that amount in a savings account in the person's name, partly to buy a high-deductible, so-called catastrophic insurance policy, the rest to be used for other purposes. After a certain amount had accumulated, if the recipient didn't need or want to use the money for health care he could use it to take a vacation, buy a boat—you name it.

Healthy and better-off people who could afford the risk would be drawn to this. The government would be putting more in their accounts per year than they currently take from Medicare, thus adding to costs and leaving less to care for the sick and less well-off. It's a skimming operation, and it ought to be dropped without a second thought.

SOLVE MEDICARE PROBLEMS IN A BIPARTISAN WAY

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, the Medicare trustees have told us that Medicare is going bankrupt. Let me quote from their own words: "We strongly recommend that the crisis presented by the financial condition of the Medicare trust funds be urgently addressed on a comprehensive basis."

This is a quote from the Medicare trustees. Six of them, four of them appointed by President Clinton, three of them Cabinet-level positions. We believe that their recommendation should be followed, and we are doing that.

We really need to address the Medicare crisis. Please join us in addressing that crisis. Please stop medagogy. Please join in the discussion which is now just beginning. The passage of this bill today is just one of a number of steps in which this bill can be modified so that it becomes ever a better and

better bill. Please join us in solving this problem for senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is morally reprehensible to frighten senior citizens for political agendas.

VOTE "NO" ON MEDICARE BILL

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the Medicare Pilfering Act of 1995 that the Republicans are bringing to the floor today.

The Republicans think they can fool the American people by dressing this bill up in Orwellian language and calling it the Medicare Preservation Act of 1995.

But the American people have caught on that they really are pilfering Medicare to pay for a tax cut for the rich.

Under the Republican plan, you reduce Medicare spending by \$270 billion and you only extend the life of the Medicare hospitalization trust fund to the year 2006. Under the Democratic alternative, you reduce Medicare spending by \$90 billion and you also extend the trust fund to the year 2006. Even the Republican staff of the Ways and Means Committee admit that the two bills achieve the very same goal.

So what is going on here? If cutting \$90 billion and cutting \$270 billion achieve the same goal, why do the Republicans insist on cutting Medicare by \$270 billion and what happens to the \$180 billion difference?

The answer is that it is being used to pay for those \$245 billion in tax cuts that we do not need and cannot afford. No matter how the Republicans disguise it, there is no escaping the fact that they are cutting Medicare to pay for tax cuts.

That is irresponsible. That is wrong. That is unfair to America's senior citizens. Vote "no" on the Medicare Pilfering Act of 1995.

JUST THE FACTS ON MEDICARE

(Mrs. VUCANOVICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Joe Friday used to say "Just the facts, ma'am." Well, here are just the facts on Medicare.

Fact: According to Clinton trustees, Medicare is going bankrupt in 7 years and Congress should do something this year to avert this disaster.

Fact: The Medicare Preservation Act will save the Medicare system, while giving choice to seniors that they have asked for time and time again.

Fact: No senior will be forced into an HMO. HMO's are simply an option for seniors, as is traditional Medicare, medical savings accounts, and provider sponsored networks.

Fact: The Medicare Preservation Act increases individual benefits for sen-

iors from \$4,800 per year today to \$6,700 per year in 2002.

Fact: By law, Medicare savings can be used only to save Medicare.

Fact: The Medicare debate has become a game of who are you going to believe: Those across the aisle who knew about the impending bankruptcy for years and did nothing? Or those who have taken the challenge and made the promise to save Medicare from an untimely death. These are just the facts.

□ 0930

DO NOT TRADE HEALTH CARE FOR TAX CUTS

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today is the day that the Republicans trade the health care of our seniors for tax cuts for the wealthy. Today is the day that the Republicans take on the best health care system in the world, the least expensive health care system in the world, in terms of overhead, and the most comprehensive health care system in the world for senior citizens, and today they trade that in for tax cuts to the wealthy.

Mr. Speaker, they do so by taking away benefits that seniors have. They do so by making sure that seniors will not be able to pay and to purchase the same health care levels and benefits that they have today 5 years from today. They will not be able to arrange for the same level of health care. And so we leave our seniors stranded so that we can provide tax cuts and capital gains cuts to the wealthiest individuals in this country.

One of my seniors from Pittsburg, CA wrote and said, "Congress must understand we seniors built this country and we deserve better. You should not do this to us."

MANAGED CARE WORKS IN MEDICARE

(Mr. BLUTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUTE. Mr. Speaker, perhaps we will have to wait a year or two until our friends on the other side of the aisle come over to our way of thinking. Similarly, we are now hearing that President Clinton is saying that the 1993 tax increase was wrong and not the right thing to do and perhaps too large. Yet we heard from Members on the other side how important that was, and now President Clinton has come over to our way of thinking.

I think our colleagues on the other side will come over to our way of thinking on Medicare because we need to save this important program. Under the Republican plan Medicare will grow by \$86 billion over the next 7